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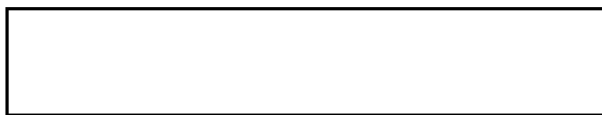


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*ETHIOPIA: Emperor Haile Selassie is likely to buy some time to deal with growing unrest in Ethiopia by accepting the resignation of the cabinet offered yesterday, but a new government would have to act quickly to restore public confidence. Ethiopia's strained financial resources will make it difficult, however, for any new government to grant the concessions required to regain control of the military and ease discontent among other segments of the populace.

The developments of the past few weeks hold political implications that far exceed the immediate economic issues. Many junior and middle-level officers are showing increased political awareness, and there is growing evidence that they are in touch with each other and with discontented civilians.

The Emperor announced yesterday that he would give priority concern to the army's living standard, but he warned that the government was unable to accede to further financial demands.

Even as the Emperor spoke, the revolt in the armed forces was worsening. Dissident troops in Asmara have placed under house arrest most of the senior officers--including the armed forces chief of staff--sent to negotiate with them. The troops sent the Emperor's aide-de-camp back to the capital with a message reiterating their demands, which still are focused mainly on economic issues.

The revolt has now spread beyond Eritrea. The town of Debre Zeit, outside Ethiopia's main airbase near Addis Ababa, has been seized by units of the air force stationed at the base. Enlisted men and noncommissioned officers have taken command of a tank company farther south of the capital. Army enlisted men and marines control naval facilities at the ports of Massawa and Assab.

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MOROCCO: An atmosphere of uneasiness prevails with the approach of March 3, the 13th anniversary of King Hassan's accession to the throne and the date on which short-lived disorders broke out last year in central Morocco.

The government is concerned about the security situation and has taken a number of precautionary measures. Security patrols in Rabat and Casablanca have been increased and numerous roadblocks set up throughout the country. The local rumor mill and the announcement that a small group of Moroccan dissidents was captured after crossing the border from Algeria have made the public nervous. The government believes the current subversion is backed by Libya, which has made no attempt to hide its hostility to King Hassan since President Qadhafi prematurely gave public support to a coup attempt against Hassan in 1971.

As long as the military and security forces remain loyal, they should easily be able to control isolated subversion launched from abroad or local demonstrations of popular discontent.

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Armed forces officers, from whose ranks came the leaders of two abortive coup attempts within the past three years, remain the chief threat to the King over the long run. Following the last military-led coup attempt in 1972, Hassan assumed direct control of the armed forces, executed those officers who were implicated, isolated potential challengers in the military, and broke up and dispersed most of the units upon which a military contender might rely. Subsequently the King sent potential troublemakers abroad with Morocco's expeditionary forces in Syria and Egypt.

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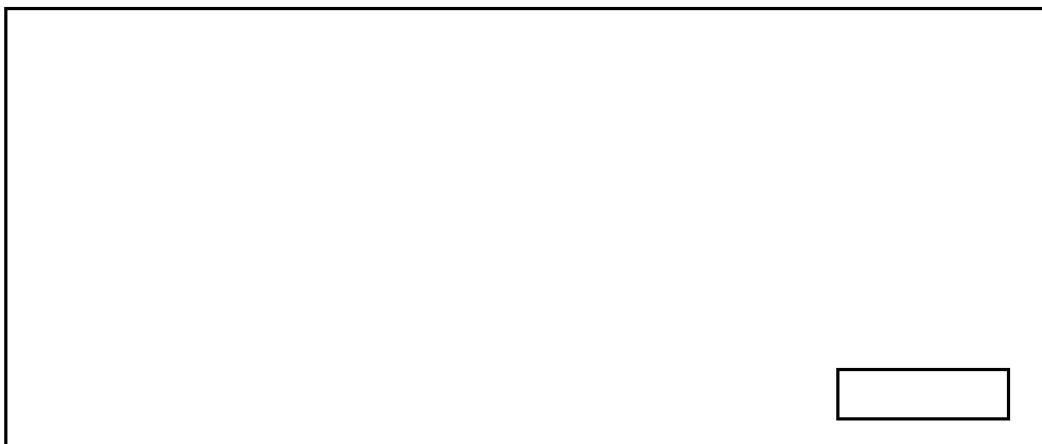
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While these actions have tightened Hassan's control of the military, many officers are increasingly restive over their direct subordination to the King, his continuing distrust of them, and Morocco's lack of modern military equipment. There is no firm evidence, however, of organized opposition within the armed forces. The missing ingredient for another coup attempt seems to be the emergence of a strong leader willing and able to seize an opportune moment to move against the King.

Hassan seeks to prevent such a development by balancing the various military and security forces against one another. His growing reliance on Colonel Ahmed Dlimi, his chief intelligence adviser, however, seems out of step with his balancing act. Although there have been no signs of disaffection between Dlimi and the King, Dlimi is approaching a position of authority that would enable him to engineer or facilitate a coup.

In the short run, King Hassan holds some strong cards. He continues to demonstrate considerable skill in political manipulation as well as continued willingness to deal summarily with dissident activity. The concentration of effective power in the palace has increased rather than diminished over the past three years, and opposition political parties are as weak and divided as ever. Moreover, the throne has some popular support as a symbol of legitimacy, and the King's narrow escapes from the two coup attempts are seen by many as proof of divine favor.

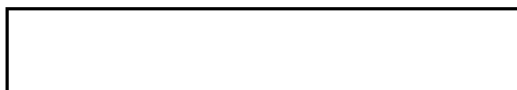


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*ARGENTINA: A rebellion by police and paramilitary forces in the industrial city of Cordoba may give President Peron the excuse he has been looking for to oust the left-leaning provincial government. Indeed, [redacted] Peron may be directly behind maneuvers to undermine leftist control of the province.

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Most of Cordoba's police have joined the insurrection to demand the removal of the governing "Marxist clique." According to press sources, police arrested the governor, his deputy, and other ministers and officials last night.

The Cordoba administration has been locked in a bitter struggle with conservative government and labor leaders in Buenos Aires since Peron's call for a purge of left-wingers last October. Peron has described Cordoba as a focus of leftist infection and has made it clear that he would like to rout Marxists and Trotskyists from key government and labor posts. The trade union movement in Cordoba is dominated by radical leftists, many of whom are well armed and violently opposed to the conservative Peronist labor bureaucracy.

Because Cordoba is a stronghold of leftist strength, violence is likely if Peron attempts to make the ouster of provincial officials stick or to use federal intervention to take over the province. Sniper gunfire has already been reported in the city, and left-wing extremists can be expected to put up a determined fight to preserve their control. [redacted]

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NORTH VIETNAM: North Vietnam will conduct a national census in April, its first since 1960. It will provide a more reliable demographic framework for the 1976-1980 Five Year Economic Development Plan discussed during the recent 22nd Central Committee plenum and the Fourth National Assembly session.

The decision to carry out the census follows on the heels of recent statements by North Vietnamese leaders focusing attention on the North's overpopulation problem. Party chief Le Duan cited a population growth of more than 10 million since the last census, a figure much higher than any Western estimates, which generally had put North Vietnam's population at about 20 million in 1960. Le Thanh Nghi, Hanoi's leading economist, has called for a new birth-control program, the first such call by a Politburo leader since 1965.

North Vietnam is intent on curbing population growth primarily because of chronic food shortages. Hanoi remains dependent on large imports of foodstuffs from China and the Soviet Union. Although data on both population and food production are scanty, the growth figure cited by Le Duan indicates that the problem of shortfalls in food production may grow worse.

In addition, North Vietnam continues to suffer from a shortage of experienced and trained technical specialists. The statements by Le Duan and Le Thanh Nghi, as well as an even more recent address by Politburo member Truong Chinh, call for accelerated training programs for such specialists.

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*ISRAEL: President Katzir has given Prime Minister Meir another week to name her cabinet. Mrs. Meir now plans to present the new government to the Knesset for approval on March 5.

The Prime Minister, much of whose time over the next few days will be taken up in discussions with Secretary Kissinger on the Syrian disengagement negotiations, can obviously use the extra week. She still has hopes of inducing the National Religious Party to join the coalition and of coaxing Defense Minister Dayan to enter the cabinet.

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FRANCE: The reshuffle of the French cabinet yesterday is apparently intended to better equip the government to meet the energy crisis, but it is not likely to relieve the infighting within the coalition over the presidential succession.

In recent months, Prime Minister Messmer's government has been strongly censured by both Gaullists and opposition leaders for its lackluster performance. Demands that the government resign peaked when an attempt to bug the offices of a satirical antigovernment newspaper was discovered last December.

The manner in which President Pompidou has handled the situation has the virtue of appearing to respond to public criticism at a time of his own choice. At the same time, Pompidou has defied the government's critics by reappointing Messmer. In effect, Pompidou has given Messmer a strong vote of confidence and reminded French politicians of the supremacy of the president's office.

Despite Pompidou's strong support, the Prime Minister is not considered a major figure in the current struggle over the presidential succession. There is, however, intense competition between supporters of Jacques Chaban-Delmas, a Gaullist, and of Valery Giscard d'Estaing, leader of the Independent Republicans, the junior partner in the coalition.

The composition of the new cabinet, which will be announced on March 1, may shed some light on the relative strength of Giscard and Chaban. Initial reports suggest, however, that major portfolios will not be affected. Jean Blancard, director of the Energy Office, may be elevated to a new cabinet-level post, and Interior Minister Marcellin is likely to be dropped because of his reported involvement in the bugging scandal. [REDACTED]

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*UN-Iran-Iraq: Tehran and Baghdad apparently have agreed on a consensus statement to be issued this afternoon by the Security Council calling for an investigation of their border dispute by a representative of the Secretary General. Council members have urged this sort of compromise in lieu of a formal resolution on the matter. []

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France - Saudi Arabia: A top-level French commercial delegation empowered to conclude agreements with Saudi officials will arrive on March 1. The delegation, composed of senior executives representing 40 French firms, will attempt to conclude a general agreement relating to an exchange of oil for industrial and technical assistance. []

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